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US ARMY

USAG Schinnen Tri-Border News Notes



Community Members participate in Historical WWII Walk



File photo

In 1944, U.S. Soldiers walked through Bastogne, Belgium to liberate the town from the Germans Occupation.

By LaDonna Davis

More than 100 walkers from the Tri-Border community, 11 of which are from U.S. Army Garrison Schinnen, will be taking part in the annual Bastogne Walk, Dec. 16 in commemoration of the 62nd Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, in Bastogne, Belgium.

This year marks the 29th anniversary of The Bastogne Historical Perimeter Walk, which honors the American "Defenders of Bastogne," and other allied Soldiers and Airmen who gave their lives for the liberation of Belgium in December, 1944 during the greatest land battle in U.S.

Army history, the Battle of the Bulge.

The walk this year, consisting of seven, 14 or 22 km. routes, will start at the Centre Sportif "Porte de Treve" in Bastogne and will wind through the north/northeast perimeter defended by the paratroopers of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. The regiment's motto is reflected on the unit's crest "CURRAHEE" a Cherokee Indian word which means "Stands Alone."

The walkers are led by Belgian WWII veteran, Maurice Sperandieu who has been retracing the defensive lines held by Ameri-

can Soldiers during the battle of the Bulge since 1977. During the walk, Sperandieu will provide participants with running commentary and history on the battle. Last year, more than 1600 marchers took part in the annual event.

"This is such an exciting opportunity to walk in the same place where so many Soldiers fought for our freedom," said Joanne Hernandez, who has signed up for this year's walk. "We're so fortunate to live in close proximity to such a historic place. The Band of Brothers visited our community and now this is a chance for us to see where they fought."

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NEWS

HERO Act expands IRA eligibility for deployed service members

By USAREUR Public Affairs

Service members and their families tend to have a few more rules to master than the average American when it comes to tax time: which allowances are taxable? Are they qualified for a combat-zone tax exemption, and if so, for how much of their income? What about a reenlistment bonus earned while deployed but not paid until redeployment – is it taxable?

This tax season, another question will likely be high on a Soldier's list: what is the HERO Act, and how can it work for me?

The HERO Act

The answer, according to the Internal Revenue Service, is that members of the military members serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and other combat zones can now put money into an individual retirement account, even if they received tax-free combat pay.

Under the Heroes Earned Retirement Opportunities Act, signed into law on Memorial Day, service members can now count tax-free combat pay when determining whether they qualify to contribute to either a Roth or traditional IRA. Before this change, military members whose earnings came entirely from tax-free combat pay were generally barred from using IRAs to save for retirement.

"The HERO act is one more way to let our fighting forces in combat areas know that we support them," said IRS commissioner Mark W. Everson. "This is a good way for people serving in combat zones to save more of their earnings for retirement."

Additionally, the HERO Act allows servicemembers who received tax-free combat pay in either 2004 or 2005 to go back and make IRA contributions for those years. Those eligible have until May 28, 2009, to make these retroactive contributions.

IRA contributions

For those under 50, the IRA contribution limit was \$3,000 for 2004 and \$4,000 for 2005. For those 50 and over, the limit was \$3,500 for 2004 and \$4,500 for 2005. For the current tax year, the IRA contribution limit is \$4,000 for those under age 50 and \$5,000 for those 50 and over.

Roth IRA contributions are not deductible, but distributions, usually after retirement, are normally tax-free. Income limits and other special

rules apply. Contributions to a traditional IRA are often, though not always, deductible, and distributions are generally taxable.

Deductible or not, contributions to a traditional IRA must be reported on the return for the year made. Deductible contributions are claimed on Form 1040, 1040A or 1040NR. Non-deductible contributions are reported on Form 8606, which is normally attached to one of these individual return forms.

If a return has already been filed for a particular year, contributions should be reported on an amended return, Form 1040x. Depending upon the circumstances, military personnel who choose to put money into a traditional IRA for 2004 or 2005 may qualify for additional tax refunds.

Tax Assistance

The Tax Program is a critical quality-of-life program that saves Soldiers, civilians and their families millions of dollars annually. Last year, U.S. Army, Europe Tax Assistance Offices processed approximately 41,650 state and federal returns, saving clients an estimated \$6 million in tax preparation fees and achieving approximately \$37.4 million in tax refunds.

"This year, our Tax Assistance Offices may be even busier due to numerous redeployments of Soldiers. Therefore, the mission of Tax Assistance Offices this season will be to assist with the current year's returns. Clients who have HERO Act IRA contributions for previous years' tax returns should contact their local Tax Assistance Office for additional information," said Lt. Col. Jeff Pedersen, chief, Military and Civil Law Division, USAREUR Office of the Judge Advocate.

According to Pedersen, Legal Assistance Offices throughout USAREUR are already planning for the 2006 tax season. Tax Assistance Offices will publicize opening dates, locations and hours of operation after the holidays. Most offices open once W-2s are released.

For tax tips and more information on issues affecting uniformed taxpayers, go to www.irs.gov and enter the keyword "military" in the search field.

(Editor's note: Some information for this article was drawn from IRS press releases)

Dentists on wheels travel Europe

By Europe Regional Medical Command

Europe Regional Dental Command's mobile dental clinic is traveling to Rotterdam, Netherlands, Dec. 3 to treat Soldiers and Coast Guardsmen preparing to deploy.

The fully-equipped and staffed mobile dental clinic will remain in Rotterdam from Dec. 3-16, where a dentist, two dental assistants, and one dental hygienist will complete examinations and treat Soldiers and Coast Guardsmen's dental problems.

The mobile dental clinic visits isolated military communities throughout Europe that do not have fixed military dental facilities.

NEWS

Look to the commissary for that special gift for the holidays

By Bonnie Powell

"Gift" is often the operative word during the holiday season and commissary customers have even more options this year through <http://www.commissaries.com>.

Whether it's one of about 100 gift baskets and bakery goods available on the new Virtual Commissary, or a commissary gift certificate, "food is always a welcome gift for your military neighbor next door, or for a military family you know elsewhere in the world," said Patrick Nixon, director and chief executive officer of the Defense Commissary Agency.

"We're excited about our new Virtual Commissary and the possibilities for the future," said Nixon. "We are up to over 100 gift baskets and baked goods available for purchase at commissary prices, for the holidays – or for any occasion." Only authorized commissary shoppers can access Virtual Commissary.

Anyone can purchase or donate the "Gift of Groceries," but they can only be spent by authorized shoppers. The commissary gift certificates can be easily purchased in small denominations at any commissary worldwide, or purchased in a variety of amounts for delivery anywhere in the world through the link at the commis-

sary Web site.

"Since the commissary benefit saves shoppers an average of 30 percent or more over commercial grocery stores, the commissary certificates offer more buying power to customers," said Nixon.



Commissary gift certificates are made possible through a business agreement with CertifiChecks Inc. There is a small charge for handling, printing and shipping the certificates. Donations of gift certificates through CertifiChecks Inc. to worldwide charitable organizations such as the Air Force Aid Society, Fisher House Foundation, Operation Homefront, and the USO have added up to over \$200,000. Many installation holiday food programs are using commissary gift certificates as well.

front was a new addition to the "Gift of Groceries" donation program in 2005.

"The gift certificates are very handy to help families with emergency needs," said Amy J. Palmer, executive vice president of operations for Operation Homefront and CinCHouse.com.

"Operation Homefront received about 250 donated certificates last year, but our local chapters can certainly put a lot more of them to good use."

The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of 30 percent or more on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$2,700 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.

Operation Home-

LEGAL

Holiday Shopping and The Netherlands Tax and Customs Issues

By The NELC

Shopping in Europe is one of the unique benefits associated with living in The Netherlands especially during the holiday season. Everyone knows that you may obtain VAT paperwork at the USAG-Schinnen DMWR VAT office for large purchases on the local economy. The VAT office will also provide the VAT paperwork for purchases made in Germany. Unfortunately, there are a couple of tax and customs considerations to keep in mind when bringing items purchased outside of the country into The Netherlands.

The first question to ask is whether you purchased the goods **in a European Union (EU) country**. If you bought an item on the economy in an EU country *and* paid the local purchase tax, you can bring the item into The Netherlands without paying additional tax. There are limitations regard-

ing cigarettes, alcohol, plants and meat products. Border customs officials may request you show proof of purchase and require you to show that the items are for personal use and not for business purposes.

A note of caution for those of you who wish to purchase expensive furniture items this holiday season. Some merchants in Belgium and Germany advertise tax-free purchases in their countries. Unfortunately, the Dutch Ministry of Finance does **not** recognize tax-free purchases by NATO forces personnel stationed in The Netherlands on the economy outside of The Netherlands. Dutch Customs may require you to pay the VAT on the full value of your purchase.

Dutch customs regulations permit tax-free purchases of €175 for items purchased **in a non-EU country**. The law makes no distinction whether

the items were purchased tax-free. The exemption applies per-person--a couple may not share the exemption for a high priced item. The exemption applies to your total purchases acquired while shopping outside The Netherlands. Unfortunately, you must report your purchases to customs officials at the border when the value of your purchases exceeds \$175, and pay the import taxes immediately. You will be taxed on the full value of the item; not merely the value over €175.

For more information check out the *Law in the Netherlands and You* publication located on the NeLC webpage. You may also contact the NeLC at DSN 364-6204 when you have a specific question concerning Dutch customs and taxes and their application to you.

Dutch Compulsory Identification Law

By The NELC

You should never leave the house without proper identification. Aside from the fact that accidents do occur and that your identity and nationality become critically important in those rare instances, carrying a proper form of identification is prudent and smart.

But, did you know that as of 1 January 2005, every person 14 years or older in The Netherlands is required to prove their personal identity when requested to do so by local police authorities? Other Dutch authorities have the ability to request your identification as well. These officials include Dutch military police and supervising authorities; tax inspectors and forest officials for example. Failure to produce personal identification may result in your temporary detention at a local police station while the Dutch official establishes who you are. Also, depending on how you conduct yourself, your overall behavior and the number of past offenses, you may be subject to a fine that can go as high as €2250.

For a Dutch citizen, a passport or Dutch drivers

license are two accepted forms of identification. By Dutch Ministerial Decree, dated 15 February 2005, the US Identification Card is recognized as a valid ID-document within the parameters of the 2005 Dutch ID law. Validity is not limited to US military personnel stationed in The Netherlands. A U.S. Government ID card is an accepted form of identification for all US military forces personnel, to include those stationed in Germany or Belgium who either live in the Netherlands or visit the Netherlands on a regular basis. Note that US civilian personnel and all dependents are required to carry their resident permit at all times.

Nonetheless, individuals assigned to our community have notified NeLC personnel that merchants, banks and other commercial businesses seem unaware of the U.S. Government ID Card exception established by Dutch Ministerial Decree. Do not stress if you encounter such an issue. Simply contact the NeLC for assistance at DSN 364-6204 or Commercial (+31)(0)45-563-6204).

LEISURE

Leisure Activities ~ by Rita Hoefnagels

Dec. 7-10: Attractive *Christmas Country Fair* at "Heerlijkheid Mariënwaerd" estate near the town of Beesd (NL). The Main house is open to the public; there will be choirs and more than 50 stands with a variety of Christmas articles. Sledge rides are also available. Open: Dec. 7-9, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Dec. 10, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Entry: €10. Take the A2 highway Utrecht-Den Bosch; exit at #14 Beesd. Follow signs "Kerstfair".

"Kerst Crea" – *Christmas Fair* at Beursgebouw, Lardinoisstraat in Eindhoven (NL). Open: 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; Dec. 8, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Entry: €8; children – free entrance.

"Season of Light" *Indoor Winter & Christmas Fair* at IJsselhallen, Rieteweg 4 in Zwolle (NL). The large halls are transformed in an enchanting village with pagoda tents magical illuminated and attractive decorated. Restaurants are also available. Open: Dec. 7-8, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Dec. 9-10, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Entry: €8.50; children (12 and younger) free entrance. The IJsselhallen complex is located near the A28 and therefore easy accessible.

Dec. 10-11, 17-18: Indoor *Christmas Market* at the Zoo on Bukenberg in Olmen (BE). Entry: €6.

Through Dec. 17: *Christmas Market* in attractive stands along the River Mosel in Cochem (GER). Open: 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Christmas Market in beautiful medieval and romantic Rothenburg ob der Tauber (GER). Open: 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Through Dec. 19: *Christmas Market* in Fluweelengrot (Velvet Cave) on Daalhemmerweg 27 in Valkenburg (NL). A unique Christmas Market held in the unique environment of the caves under the castle ruins. Opens in the weekends at 10 a.m. and on weekdays at noon; Closes Sundays – Thursdays at 8 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays at 9 p.m. Entry: €3.75; children (4-11) €1.75.

Christmas Market in a Cave at Gemeentegrot in the center of Valkenburg (NL). Open on weekdays, noon-9 p.m.; weekends, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Entry: €3.50; children (4-11) €1.75.

Through Dec. 21: *Christmas Market* at historic Römerberg, Paulsplatz and Mainkai in the center of Frankfurt am Main (GER). Open: Mondays-Saturdays, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sundays, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

Christmas Market at Market Square in the center of Heinsberg (GER), open daily noon-8 p.m.

Through Dec. 22: *Christmas Market* at several locations in Heidelberg (GER), open daily 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

Christmas Market in the center of Kaiserslautern (K-Town) in Germany, open: 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Medieval Christmas Market at Market Square in the center of Siegburg (GER) open daily 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Enchanting *Christmas Market* at the medieval market in front of the imposing cathedral in the center of Trier (GER). Open: Mondays-Saturdays, 10 a.m.-8:30 p.m.; Sundays, 11 a.m.-8:30 p.m.

Through Dec. 23: *Christmas Market* around the attractive historic Town Hall in the center of Aachen (GER), open daily 11 a.m.-8:30 p.m.

Christmas Market in Bamberg (GER). Open: 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Christmas Market in Bochum (Germany). Open: 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Christmas Market at Münsterplatz; Bottlerplatz and Friedensplatz in the center of Bonn (GER), open: 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Christmas Market in the center of Brühl (GER), open: 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Christmas Market at Neumarkt and Alter Markt in the center of Cologne (GER). Around the Imhoff-Stollwerck-chocolademuseum (chocolate museum) one will find a *Medieval Christmas Market* and a *Fairy Tale Christmas Market* at Rudolfsplatz. Open: 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Special is the *Floating Christmas Market*. On board of the "MS Wappen von Mainz" you can browse for presents at the more than 40 stands and enjoy a glass of wine and the view of the Old Town and the cathedral. The "MS Wappen von Mainz" can be found in the Old Town near the Cologne philharmonic orchestra house. Open: 11 a.m.-10 p.m.

Christmas Market in the center of Dortmund (GER). This is one of Germany's largest and most beautiful Christmas Markets. Open: Mondays-Saturdays, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sundays, noon-9 p.m.

Christmas Market at Boulevard Königsstrasse in the center of Duisburg (GER). Open: Sundays-Thursdays, 11 a.m.-8 p.m.; Fridays-Saturdays, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Nov. 26, 6-9 p.m.

Romantic *Nikolausmarkt* at Market Square in the old historic center of Düsseldorf (GER). Open: Sundays-Thursdays, 11 a.m.-8 p.m. and Fridays-Saturdays, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

International Christmas Market in the center of Essen (GER) with 265 stands and a beautiful 18 meter high Christmas tree. Open daily 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

Christmas Market in the center of Krefeld (GER). Open 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Christmas Market in the beautiful and attractive old city of Hameln (GER). The city's restored timber houses and elegant historic buildings are a perfect background for the Christmas market. Open: Mondays-Thursdays, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Fridays-Saturdays, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sundays, 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Christmas Market at Königsplatz and Friedrichsplatz in the center of Kassel (GER). Kassel is the hometown of two brothers – The Grimm Brothers famous for their fairy tales. It is therefore that visitors will find a unique market here: a *Fairy Tale Christmas Market*. Open daily 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Floating Christmas Market in Maastricht (NL). Stiphout Shipping Company's largest ship, which can be found at the Maaspromenade, is in this period the location of a Christmas Market. The ship is decorated for Christmas and features all kind of attractive stands with traditional and typical Christmas items. There is no entrance fee and the market is open during normal shopping hours.

Christmas Market in the center of Mannheim (GER), open: 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

Christmas Fair at the historic Market Square against the imposing back-drop of the over thousand year old Cathedral in the center of Mainz (GER). Open: Mondays-Fridays, 11 a.m.-8:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sundays, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

Christmas Market at the romantic market square in the center of Monschau (GER). The market is only open on Fridays, 2-8 p.m.; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Münchner Christkindlmarkt (Christmas Market) at several locations in the center of München (GER).

Christmas Market outside Europe's largest mall in Oberhausen (Germany). Open Sundays-Fridays, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.

Lucrezia Market, a special market with cute wooden stands filled with charming art and crafts and all kinds of delicatessen at Haidplatz and Kohlenmarkt in Regensburg (GER). Open: daily 11 a.m.-7:30 p.m.

Christmas Market of Nations in the historical and romantic old quarters of Rüdesheim (GER). About 120 stands in the center of the city represent 12 nations. Open daily 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Twinkling Star Market at Schlossplatz in Wiesbaden (GER). The idyllic square with the historic city palace is a real atmospheric location for the Christmas market. Open: Mondays-Thursdays, 10:30 a.m.-9 p.m.; Fridays-Saturdays, 10:30 a.m.-9:30 p.m.; Sundays, noon-9 p.m.

Christmas Market at the historic Lady Mary Chapel (Marienkappelle) and Falkenhaus square in the center of Würzburg (GER). A beautiful *Christmas Art Market* can be found at the inner court of the old Ratskeller on Domstrasse. Open daily 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Through Dec. 30: *Christmas Village* at Place de Marché and Place Saint Lambert in Liège (BE) has become one of the largest and most attractive fairs in Belgium. "Village de Noël" is a festive and friendly Belgian mix of Alsatian and German Christmas ingredients.

Through Dec. 31: *Christmas Market* in the center of Berlin. The capital of Germany has many Christmas Markets and events. All are open daily 11 a.m.-10 p.m.

Through Jan. 1: *Winter Wonders* in Brussels (BE). Every winter, the heart of Brussels beats to the rhythm of "plaisirs d'Hiver (winter pleasures)" featuring a magical décor; a beautiful European Christmas Market (Europe's most originally) which is illuminated by the Big Wheel; roundabouts; street activities and an ice-skating rink. Open: Mondays-Thursdays, 11 a.m.-8 p.m.; Fridays-Sundays, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. The ice-skating rink is open daily till 10 p.m.

Through Jan. 7: *Winterland* in the center of Maastricht (NL). The Vrijthof in the center of Maastricht is transformed into a large ice-skating rink. There are many stands and many traditional and nostalgic attractions and **through Dec. 23** you will find a Christmas Market in the surrounding streets, daily open 11 a.m.-9 p.m., on Fridays and Saturdays the market is open till 10 p.m.

SCHINNEN NOTES

Parent-teacher group partners with AFNORTH International Elementary

By Susan Houston

There is an exciting and growing organization at the AFNORTH International Elementary School called the Parents, Teachers and Students Association or PTSA. According to PTSA President Jane Yasenchak, "Our goal is to partnership with the school to help make the AFNORTH International Elementary School even better".

PTSA provides support to the school, teachers and students in many ways. A few examples include: providing funds for The Back-to-School Fall Fair, the Spelling Bee registration and travel, National Geographic Geography Bee, Teacher Appreciation Week, grants to teacher for supplies and Odyssey of the Mind registration.

"We generate most of the money from PTSA registrations, soda machine revenue, selling spirit wear clothing items such as t-shirts and sweatshirts. This year we have a new program called Box Tops for Education," said Yasenchak. In addition, according to PTSA Vice President Yutona Siikavaara, "PTSA members provide volunteer time too. A few examples include: making, selling and

distributing the yearbook, Scholastic Books in the classroom, selling and distributing spirit wear clothing items. Volunteers are always needed and welcome!"

Parents, teachers and students can join and help continue AFNORTH's outstanding reputation for education. Any nationality can join and or volunteer. Stop by the US Elementary Office and pick-up an application or contact Jane Yasenchak at (31) 043-458-9460, Yutona Siikavaara at (49) 02406-666-552 or PTSA Secretary, Deborah Morello at (31) 046-442-1780 for more information.

The next PTSA General Membership Meeting will be Jan. 16 at 6:45 pm in the school cafeteria—stop by for more information or to get involved. Jane Yasenchak, stated, "Consider being a Board member for the 2007-2008 school year." PTSA Treasurer, Consuelo Munoz -Cook, is PCSing or leaving this summer and we'll need a new Treasurer—it would be ideal to start training her replacement after the new year. Please be a part of your child's future by helping PTSA!

JFC BRUNSSUM CHAPEL 2006 HOLIDAY SERVICES

Date	Time	Type of Service	Location	On/Off-Post
Dec. 10	5:00 p.m.	International Carol Service	JFC Brunssum Chapel	ON
		CATHOLIC		
Dec 9	5:00 p.m.	Barn Mass	Schimmert	OFF
Dec. 24	5:00 p.m.	Family Mass	JFC Brunssum GK Chapel	ON
Dec 24	Midnight	Midnight Mass	GK Chapel	ON
Dec. 25	noon	Catholic Mass	JFC Brunssum East Chapel	ON
		PROTESTANT		
Dec. 24	7:00 p.m.	Candlelight Service	JFC Brunssum East Chapel	ON

SCHINNEN NOTES

Schinnen Community Update

Schinnen Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony The annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony will be held on Dec. 7 at 5:30 p.m. at the USAG Schinnen Emma Mine Complex. All Tri-Border community members and family are invited to attend.

American Delegation present an international tour of homes, Dec. 15 from 10 a.m.-4:00 p.m. For tickets, contact 046-442-2243 or 045-545-9450.

French Wine Tasting Eight Vignerons with wine for tasting and sale will gather at the International Inn, Dec. 14 from 5:00 p.m.-8 p.m. Pay at the door.

Use or Lose Annual Leave The 2006 annual leave year will end on Saturday, Jan. 6, 2007. Employees who have accrued annual leave in excess of the maximum carry-over authorized (use or lose) will forfeit the excess leave they have accrued at the close of business on that date.

Except for an emergency situation there should be no employees who have to forfeit unused annual leave.

TIER III Closed From Dec. 15, 2006 until Jan. 2, 2007 the TIER III help-desk in Schinnen - The Netherlands is closed. In case you need to get support on TIER III, please do contact the Wuerzburg help desk at DSN 350-7504 or send them an email at the following address; maintdesk@cmtymail.98asg.army.mil

Fitness Center Renovations USAG Schinnen Fitness Center will be having carpet removed and a new floor installed Dec. 4-9 on the 2nd Floor in the Cardio Room. Cardio equipment will be relocated to the Aerobic/Spinning Cycle Room. Sorry for the inconvenience.

Winter Woods Walk The Airman and Family Readiness Center at Geilenkirchen invite all families and their pets to enjoy a day of outdoors and fun at the 1st Winter Woods Walk Dec. 9 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the New Gym Pavilion Geilenkirchen. There will be pictures, warm chili, hot cocoa and more for the entire family to enjoy.

Bowling Center Information Beginning Dec. 20, the Bowling Center including the Pin Point Café and Harry's BBQ, will be open Wednesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. until 6 p.m. It will be closed December 24-26 and December 31 through January 2. Cosmic bowling has permanently moved to Saturday nights beginning at 6 p.m.

TDY Orders and approval Please ensure you have notified all USAG Schinnen soldiers and civilians that when routing your TDY orders they must be accompanied by the travelers up to date *anti-terrorism level one training* certificate. To complete the training go to <https://atlevel1.dtic.mil/at/>. You orders will not be approved through the AT/FP Officer without the certificate.

Loss and the Holidays Workshop "Loss and the Holidays" is a workshop for persons that have had a loved one die and believes the holidays could be difficult for them. The workshop will be held from 7:00-8:30 p.m. on Dec. 7 at JFC Brunssum Chapel, third floor. The workshop will give practical tips for dealing with holiday stress and difficulties because of a loved one's death. Call 364.2307/2940 to reserve your place in the class

AFAP Conference 2007 You've lived in different places and have different experiences and AFAP wants to capture your knowledge....

Make the Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) aware of how the Army could improve well being locally as well as nationally by writing an issue of concern or improvement for Schinnen, Europe, or the overall Army.

Our upcoming February 2007 Conference will have delegates work on your issue as well as others in an effort to increase overall Army Community well being.

Look for the orange cardboard boxes issue boxes near our community AFAP Poster, "A World of Experience Within Our Community", and fill

out a form or email us at ACS-Schinnen@Eur.Army.mil. Call ACS at 443-7500.

Recipe's Wanted Do you have a recipe that you would like to share with other community members? Maybe a new twist on an old favorite, or a family favorite tradition that anyone could enjoy? Email it to the USAG Schinnen public affairs office along with a little history of the recipe for our new Tri-Border News Notes monthly recipe corner section. Whether it's a Dutch recipe (translated to English please), American, or anything in between, we'd love to hear from you. Email at paousag-shi@benelux.army.mil

Dancing Fun Do you or your child want to learn how to ballet or dance the flamingo, then sign up for dancing fun today! Classes begin Jan. 8. Sign up in the JFC Brunssum Gymnasium upper room (3rd floor) or call CER at 045-563-6221 for more information.

PWOC Fellowship Night Ladies, take a break from the Holiday Rush! Enjoy an evening of fellowship and music as we celebrate Christ, and remember the true meaning of Christmas. Protestant Women Of the Chapel Fellowship Night Friday, December 15th at 7:00 p.m. 3rd Floor - JFC Brunssum International Chapel Childcare Provided
For more information call (31) 0436010290

FEHB Open Season Open season for many federal benefits programs runs from Nov. 13 through Dec 11. During this time, federal employees can start, stop, or make changes to the following:

Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB)

Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA)

Federal Dental Insurance (NEW)

Federal Vision Insurance (NEW)

Enrollments or changes are done online using three different websites:

The Army Benefits Center-Civilian <http://www.abc.army.mil>

Select Benefits/EBIS and use your AKO userid/password. You will also need an ABC-C PIN. If you don't have one or have forgotten it, you can get a new one by following the instructions on the website.

◆ Flexible Spending Accounts-

<http://www.fsafeds.com> You can get information about the program as well as enroll on this site

◆ Dental and Vision Insurance-

<http://www.benefeds.com>. You can get information about the programs as well as enroll on this site.

Dental and vision insurance, are new this year. Both are supplementary plans-you pay the entire cost of the insurance. Premiums are paid from pre-taxed earnings. You can enroll if you are eligible for FEHB coverage; you do not have to be enrolled in an FEHB plan. There are five different carriers offering dental insurance, and three carriers offering vision insurance.

Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) are a way for you to set aside money from pre-taxed earnings for either health care, dependent care, or both. For health care, the FSA can be used to pay deductibles, co-payments, or various other health care expenses, including over-the-counter medication. See the FSA website for a complete list of covered items.

TSC Treebeek will be closed on following days:

Dec. 15

Dec. 21 (12:00)-Dec 27 ;

Dec. 29-Jan. 3.

Only for emergency issues you can call 361-5238.

SCHINNEN NOTES



US A G Schinnen Holiday Hours

AAFES Holiday Hours

December 7, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. (tree lighting)

December 18, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

December 24, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

December 25, Closed

December 31, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

January 1, 2007 CLOSED (PX/PXTRA)

Shoppette 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

CAR CARE REGULAR HOURS

Commissary Holiday Hours

December 24, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

December 25, Closed

Community Bank

December 25, Closed

December 26, Closed

Andrews Federal Credit Union

December 25, Closed

Merry Christmas from US A G Schinnen
Your Happy Holiday "Community of Choice"